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TAGS: [IS KMDR MEDIA REACTION REPORT](#)  
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

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SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:  
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- [1](#)1. Mideast
- [1](#)2. Lebanese-Syrian Track
- [1](#)3. Global War on Terrorism

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Key stories in the media:  
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Israel Radio reported that a joint session of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee and of the Knesset's Constitution, Law, and Justice Committee this morning started discussing the issue of disengagement. PM Sharon, senior ministers, and top defense establishment officials and civil servants, are among the meeting's participants. The radio quoted Sharon as saying that the government will not accept the creation by settlers of a 'tent city,' which he said was a political protest. Sharon called for the evacuees to "think of the children."

Leading media reported that the Knesset plenum will hold a special session and vote today on the planned deployment of Egyptian forces along the Philadelphi route. The session is being held in the wake of Ha'aretz's lead story on Monday, according to which Israel and Egypt are on the verge of concluding an agreement that will see Egyptian border guards deployed opposite the Philadelphi route in Rafah. On Monday, leading media reported that Attorney-General Menachem Mazuz stated that there was no need for the Knesset's approval of the deal.

Israel Radio reported that Israel and the PA have reached an agreement on the creation of an overland connection between Gaza and the West Bank following the disengagement. Under the agreement, during the first stage Israel security forces will escort convoys of Palestinian vehicles traveling between the two areas. Israel has proposed linking the two territories by railroad in the future.

All media quoted Israel's National Security Council Chairman Giora Eiland as saying that PA Civil Affairs Minister Muhammad Dahlan is demanding that Israel extend its withdrawal from the Gaza Strip two kilometers northward, in accordance to the 1949 borders. Jerusalem Post reported that Eiland dismissed Dahlan's demand as a "gimmick," and that Israel made it "clear" to the PA that the present border had been set in agreement with Egypt in 1950, and that the same border was reconfirmed in 1994 under the Oslo Accords. The media cited the concerns of the residents of Moshav Netiv Ha'asara, which occupies this piece of land, that their community could become a new "Sheba Farms" area.

Ha'aretz reported that the Bayit Leumi (National Home) movement, which is responsible for the road-blocking campaign to protest the disengagement plan, has told its members to camp out in Gush Katif. Maariv cited an official Hamas document, according to which the group intends to turn Qassam rockets into weapons that would bypass the separation fence after the disengagement and reach major Israeli cities. Leading media quoted Hamas spokesmen in Gaza as saying that Hamas dismisses the usefulness of Hamas's joining the Palestinian government.

The weekend's headlines were dominated by Finance Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's alleged intention to absent himself from Wednesday's Knesset vote on a

postponement of the disengagement, and the possible firing of Netanyahu by Sharon over this matter.

Leading media reported on the Fourth of July celebration held last night at Ambassador Dan Kurtzer's residence in Herzliya Pituach. Sharon, who praised American democracy and democratic developments in the Middle East, said that the pullout from Gaza and the northern West Bank would proceed on schedule.

Israel Radio reported that, concerned about possible Palestinian claims that Israel is poisoning Palestinian areas, the Environment Ministry will conduct an independent survey about the state of pollution in the areas due to be vacated by Israel.

Jerusalem Post reported that on Monday, former U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross attacked EU officials who have met recently with Hamas members, saying that such meetings are undercutting the PA.

On Monday, leading media quoted IDF officials as saying that last week's infiltration of a Hizbullah cell into the Sheba Farms region was part of a plan to abduct soldiers.

Israel Radio reported that Israeli security forces have arrested an Islamic Jihad member in Ramallah.

On Sunday, Ha'aretz and Jerusalem Post reported that the bulk of residents in the Jenin-area settlement of Ganim packed up on their own volition -- a full six weeks before the community's slated evacuation is to begin.

On Monday, Jerusalem Post reported that, in a test case to force the government to take the issue of unauthorized outposts seriously, Pease Now asked the High Court of Justice on Sunday to force the Defense Ministry to demolish nine homes in the unauthorized West Bank outpost of Amona.

On Monday, Maariv reported that European infrastructure companies are considering cooperating with Israeli firms in PA projects following the disengagement.

Jerusalem Post reported that Israeli astronomers equipped with a special telescope supplied the U.S. with useful data on Monday about Deep Impact, the first man-made collision with a comet, which was carried out on July 4 to mark U.S. Independence Day.

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1. Mideast:  
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Summary:  
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Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "Why make Bibi [Netanyahu] look big? Why extricate him from the government of disengagement? Why not let him keep on sweating within it, imprisoned and helpless?"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized: "Military cooperation between the PA and Hamas could suggest and perhaps even guarantee a smoother and quieter withdrawal.... When the time comes for political negotiations, Israel can demand that every organization represented in the PA recognize Israel's right to exist as a precondition for such talks."

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "Hamas's inclusion [in the PA government] would also give the lie to Abbas's claims of support for the road map and a two-state solution."

Block Quotes:  
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I. "Kindergarten"

Diplomatic correspondent Ben Caspit wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (July 3): "Let us start with the bottom line: Ariel Sharon never had a shred of intention to dismiss Binyamin Netanyahu if he had been absent without warning, or as part of a plot, from this

coming Wednesday's Knesset vote on the postponement of disengagement.... It is obvious that if Netanyahu supports the postponement of disengagement in the Knesset, he will be dismissed. But to abstain, or to absent himself from the vote? That can be borne in silence. Why make Bibi look big? Why extricate him from the government of disengagement? Why not let him keep on sweating within it, imprisoned and helpless? The prevailing attitude around Sharon is simple: be quiet, we're disengaging. Just six more weeks to go. This is not the time to rock the boat, however enjoyable that may be. Netanyahu outside can start riots, create chaos, or ignite tempers. No one can know how far that will go. It is better to keep quiet, wipe the spit off your face and keep going."

## II. " Hamas, a Part of the PA"

Independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz editorialized (July 5): "Palestinian Authority Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas' proposal to Hamas that it join the government he heads managed to evoke livid Israeli reactions even before Hamas made a decision on the matter. Israel's conditioned response, according to which it will not negotiate with any entity defined as a terror organization, left no room for discretion, and certainly not for a review of the advantages in the proposal. In Palestinian society, the Hamas movement is perceived as part of the political and cultural tapestry. In Israel, it is seen as a terror organization.... Without the inclusion of Hamas as the largest military opposition organization, Abbas cannot offer the Palestinians and Israel a responsible authority that is capable of meeting its commitments. From Israel's point of view, political and, primarily, military cooperation between the PA and Hamas could suggest and perhaps even guarantee a smoother and quieter withdrawal.... In light of the fact that, at this stage, Israel is not offering the PA anything in return in the political field, but sees the PA only as a functional organization that has the job of preserving the quiet, it would be best if Israel were to refrain from raising the roof over the issue of cooperation with Hamas. When the time comes for political negotiations, Israel can demand that every organization represented in the PA recognize Israel's right to exist as a precondition for such talks."

## III. "Two Unities"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized (July 5): "In Israel, the settler leadership and its rabbis are reportedly close to issuing a code of conduct for opposition to the disengagement plan, insisting on complete non-violence. On the Palestinian side, Mahmoud Abbas has offered Hamas to join a 'unity government.' Both of these efforts, on the surface, are geared toward stemming the slide toward civil war within each community. The contrast between them, however, could not be more stark.... The difference between democracy and its hijacking is whether terrorist groups that join a political process, whether Hizbullah in Lebanon or Hamas in the PA, disarm and abandon terrorism. Hizbullah and Hamas have done neither, so their inclusion grants them veto power that can only mean violence, instability and stalemate. Hamas's inclusion would also give the lie to Abbas's claims of support for the road map and a two-state solution.... Our 'civil war' represents the tail end of our political metamorphosis. Abbas's unity pitch, by contrast, once again avoids the necessary Palestinian transformation, whereby that polity stops dreaming of destroying Israel and starts building a peaceful, democratic state alongside us."

## 12. Lebanese-Syrian Track:

### Summary:

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized: "If even Tony Blair's UK will not employ its presidency [of the European Union] to lead the way to the minimal and obvious step of branding Hizbullah a terrorist organization, it is hard to imagine anyone, certainly not the rogue states themselves, taking the West's rhetoric about fighting terrorism seriously."

### Block Quotes:

"Start With Hizbullah"

Conservative, independent Jerusalem Post editorialized

(July 4): "While the threat from Hizbullah might be seen as small potatoes compared to the nuclear challenge from its Iranian sponsors, the two are clearly connected. Why should Iran take Europe's claim, that it will block an Iranian bomb, seriously when the EU seems too timid even to confront the mullah's terrorist proxy? Every year since 9/11, G8 summits have made resounding statements about the need to fight global terrorism, and even unveiled concrete initiatives for international cooperation to this end. The real test, however, is whether the West can stand together and use its collective diplomatic and economic power (let alone military strength) to defend itself from rogue states and their proxies. If even Tony Blair's UK will not employ its presidency [of the European Union] to lead the way to the minimal and obvious step of branding Hizbullah a terrorist organization, it is hard to imagine anyone, certainly not the rogue states themselves, taking the West's rhetoric about fighting terrorism seriously."

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13. Global War on Terrorism:  
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Summary:  
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Nationalist writer Uri Dan opined in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post: "Perhaps it would be best for the U.S. to intervene now in the affair of the attack in Mombasa and explain to the Kenyan government the gravity of releasing, unpunished, the seven accused in Nairobi."

Block Quotes:  
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"Soft on Terrorism"

Nationalist writer Uri Dan opined in conservative, independent Jerusalem Post (July 3): "The court in Nairobi, Kenya, that recently acquitted seven people accused of perpetrating a terrorist attack on Israelis in Mombasa awarded another victory to al-Qaida. If it hadn't been for the efforts of the Israeli investigators sent to Kenya immediately after the attack in 2002, none of the accused would have been arrested.... It was well known in Washington, and particularly in the CIA, that the incriminating evidence presented for the arrest of the seven accused in Kenya, was very serious. But the judicial authorities in Kenya apparently don't care.... It seems that Kenya does not understand that through its actions it is abetting al-Qaida in its terrorist activities. Perhaps it would be best for the U.S. to intervene now in the affair of the attack in Mombasa and explain to the Kenyan government the gravity of releasing, unpunished, the seven accused in Nairobi."

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